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## Venezuela

### Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards - Certification

### FAIRS Export Certificate Report

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**Report Highlights:**

Imports of food and agricultural products are subject to a list of requirements given by the Venezuelan "tariff regime." The requirements include sanitary certificates, import permits, import licenses, and product registration through various Ministries.

#### Section I. List of All Export Certificates Required By Government

- Sanitary Certificate from the Country of Origin

- Registration through the Ministry of Health
- Sanitary Import Permit issued by the Ministry of Agriculture, through its Agricultural Health Service
- Import License issued by the Ministry of Food

## **Section II. Purpose of Specific Export Certificate(s)**

### **Animal Products and Unprocessed Plant Products**

According to the Venezuelan harmonized tariff schedule, imports of food and agricultural products are subject to a list of requirements given by its “tariff regime” (in Spanish: regimen legal). The requirements include: sanitary certificates, import permits, import licenses and product registration.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (BRV) is responsible, through its different Ministries, for issuing import permits, import licenses and product registration. The Ministry of Agriculture and Lands (MAT) issues import permits; the Ministry of Food (MINAL) issues import licenses and the Ministry of Health (MH) grants food registration for all domestic and imported processed food products. Foods not registered in the country of origin cannot be registered in Venezuela.

The BRV requires a “sanitary certificate” from the country of origin. Specific sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) statements (treatment and other conditions) are required for each type of product and are determined by the authorities on a case-by-case basis.

Through the Agricultural Health Service (in Spanish: Instituto Nacional de Salud Agrícola Integral, or INSAI), the Ministry of Agriculture is responsible for quality control and inspection with respect to manufacturing, processing, importation, exportation, storage, distribution, and marketing of food, biological products, medications, and animal feed, as well as for the laboratories that control the quality of these products. INSAI has similar functions to those of the US Department of Agriculture’s APHIS.

INSAI is charged with issuing phytosanitary or sanitary health import permits for imported products and sub products of plant or animal origin, and animals and plant breeding material. The guidelines provided by INSAI are the following:

- Prior to importing animal products and/or unprocessed plant products, importers should request and obtain a sanitary health (SPS) import permit from INSAI.
- Specific SPS statements (treatment and other conditions) for each type of product are determined by INSAI on a case-by-case basis.
- Specific SPS statements are written on the import permit issued by INSAI.
- The “remarks” section of the export certificate on FSIS or APHIS letterhead certificate should include the specific SPS statements, and should be written both in English and Spanish.
- An APHIS veterinarian or equivalent FSIS official must sign the export certificate.
- No product should be loaded in a vessel before the import permit is received and the sanitary statements required in it are written on the USDA export certificate.
- INSAI’s import permits have a non-renewable period of validity of between 60 and 90 days, depending on the product:
  - *Sanitary health import permits are issued for animal products and livestock-farming inputs (validity of 60 days).*

- *Phytosanitary import permits are issued for plant products (validity of 90 days).*
- Import permits are only valid for one shipment.
- Every shipment must be accompanied by an import permit and its corresponding APHIS or FSIS export certificate.

## Import Licenses

Import licenses are valid for one year, and can only be renewed if, on expiry, they have not been used for reasons outside the importer's control. When applying for a license, established importers are required to submit a monthly list of imports actually realized, indicating volume and value, together with the invoice on the most recent import that indicates the volume and value of the merchandise. The importer must indicate the amount of the allocated quota that remains unused, which in some cases is reincorporated into the quota to be reassigned. The following is the list of products that are subject to import licenses:

**Table 5. List of Products that Require Import Licenses**

Yellow corn	Sorghum
Soya beans	Palm nuts and kernels
Soya bean oil	Other oils
Palm oil	Sunflower seed oil
Coconut oil	Other vegetable fats and oils
Soya bean cake	Animal and vegetable fats
Degras, yellow grease	Milk and cream, not concentrated
Milk in powder, not exceeding 1.5% fat	Whole milk 26%
Cheese	

## Processed Animal Products

An FSIS certificate must accompany each shipment of meat and poultry and/or their products. Venezuela accepts imports from all FSIS approved plants. Below are the certificate requirements of the Venezuelan Government currently included in the FSIS export certificate library. As noted above for unprocessed plant products, importers are required to have an import permit before importing meat and poultry products. All FSIS inspected meat and poultry plants are eligible to export to Venezuela.

## Eligible/Ineligible Products

- A. Eligible
1. Pork is eligible to export to Venezuela. (Most recent revision on 03/30/2004)
  2. Cooked poultry products.
  3. Natural pork casings. (Most recent revision on 03/30/2004)

For ruminant meat and ruminant meat products, sanitary import permits have not been issued. (Most recent revision on 03/30/2004).

## Documentation Requirements

### A. Beef, mutton and lamb

- Obtain FSIS Form 9060-5 Export Certificate of Wholesomeness

### B. Pork and Pork Products

- Obtain FSIS Form 9060-5 Export Certificate of Wholesomeness
- The following statements must be included in the "Remarks" section of FSIS Form 9060-5:

*a. The meat was derived from animals that were born and raised in the United States or Canada;*

*b. The meat was received from slaughter and processing of clinically healthy swine, which originated from premises and localities free from infectious animal diseases, including swine vesicular disease and African swine fever; and*

*c. The meat comes from establishments or pork herds submitted under official control, in which in the last 24 months, trichinosis cases have not been detected or the product was submitted to freezing according to USDA 9 CFR 318.10 (c)(2), which guarantees the destruction of the parasite.*

Note (for information-this is not a required statement): The term "infectious animal diseases" means that, at the time of slaughter, the animals were not under official quarantine or any other State or Federal restriction due to disease and passed ante mortem and postmortem inspection.

- In addition to the above statements which are required for pork meat, exporters or their agents must provide the following certification on company letterhead:

*a. The meat is shipped in refrigerated containers that guarantee its temperature; and*

*b. The containers were washed and disinfected using products approved by the exporting country.*

Note: This certificate is not signed by FSIS personnel. However, it must include the MP number from the FSIS 9060-5 for identification with a particular shipment.

### C. Cooked poultry products - Obtain FSIS Form 9060-5 Export Certificate of Wholesomeness. The following statements must be included in the "Remarks" section of FSIS Form 9060-5:

*"Cooked poultry product was cooked, reaching an internal temperature of not less than 68° C (155° F)."*

### D. Animal Casings - Obtain FSIS form 9060-18, Animal Casings Export Certificate for Countries Requiring Ante-Mortem, Post-Mortem, and Sound and Clean Statements

### E. The importer must obtain a health import permit from the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands' Animal Health and Industry Administration.

## Processed Food Products

All domestic and imported processed food products must be registered with the Government of

Venezuela, through the Ministry of Health before they can be sold to Venezuelan consumers. The Ministry of Health's Health Comptroller Division and Food Hygiene Division, supervise food safety.

The registration of the processed food products is valid for five years. After five years, a new application may be made to the Ministry of Health to renew the registration. Although Venezuelan law does not prohibit a foreign exporter to register food products, a local consultant or agent may prove to be the best resource in order to complete the food registration process.

### **Free Sale Certificate**

Venezuela requests a certificate of free sale and consumption issued by competent authorities in the country of origin. The certificate must state that the food is for human consumption, or for processing, or for use as an input in food for human consumption in the country of origin, with a period of validity of 12 months from the date of application. The Venezuelan authorities do not accept sanitary export certificates issued by local or states authorities; they must be endorsed by FDA and/or APHIS depending on the product.

If the products to be exported have been properly registered at the Venezuelan Ministry of Health, the documents do not need to be notarized or legalized for each shipment; they just need to be "apostille" or stamped (as per The Hague Convention on Foreign Public Documents).

Free Sale Certificates are not in the list of requirements of the Venezuelan Custom Authorities (SENIAT) and sometimes this leads to situations where customs officials may not accept certain semi-processed and processed food products that are normally exempt from "sanitary certificates" issued by third countries. If this is the case, INSAI, will decide whether to accept or not the Free Sale Certificate after a scientific evaluation. INSAI has the authority to recommend the acceptance of the Certificate.

### **Wood Packing Material**

All wood packaging materials arriving into Venezuela must to carry the agreed international seals certifying that the wood has been treated as recommended by the international conventions after August 1, 2005, "Guidelines for Regulating Wood Packaging Material in International Trade" under the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC).

### **Section III. Specific Attestations Required on Export Certificate(s)**

Specific sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) statements (treatment and other conditions) are required for each type of product and are determined by INSAI authorities on a case-by-case basis, and are provided by them when an application for an import permit is submitted by an importer.

### **Section IV. Government Certificate's Legal Entry Requirements**

- Original Sanitary Certificates from the country of origin need to accompany the product at the time of entry.
- Sanitary Certificates from the country of origin are only accepted for one shipment and one specified port of entry.
- Venezuela does not accept "Suppliers or Manufacturers Export Declaration" as proof of compliance.
- For processed food products no specific certificate from the exporting country is required at the time of entering Venezuelan ports, if the product has been already registered with the Ministry of Health.
- Venezuela does not accept sanitary export certificates by US state-level authorities.

## Section V. Other Certification/Accreditation Requirements

The Venezuelan government provides information about import requirements through its harmonized tariff schedule (in Spanish: Arancel de Aduanas). The import requirements are the following ("Regimen Legal"):

**Table 6. Import Requirements**

<b>Legal Regime</b>	<b>Description</b>
Note 1	Prohibited Import
Note 2	Imports reserved to the Government
Note 3	Permit from the Ministry of Health
Note 4	Permit from the Ministry of Commerce
Note 5	Sanitary Certificate from the Country of Origin
Note 6	Sanitary Permit from the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
Note 7	Permit from the Ministry of Defense
Note 8	Import License administered through the Ministry of Food
Note 9	Import License administered through the Ministry of Commerce
Note 10	Permit from the Ministry for the Environment
Note 11	Permit from the Ministry of Energy and Petroleum
Note 12	Sanitary Registry issued by the Ministry of Health
Note 13	Sanitary Registry issued by the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
Note 14	Permit from the Ministry of Food
Note 15	Permit from the Ministry of Basic Industries and Mining

Products being imported into Venezuela must also comply with other requirements. Details of these requirements are contained in the Food and Agriculture Import Regulations and Standards (FAIRS) report, updated in December 2009 and the 2010 version which will be released in the near future. These reports will be available on the FAS website.

## APPENDIX I

Services and Agencies under the Ministry of Health  
(Ministerio de La Salud y Desarrollo Social –MSDS)

Contraloría Sanitaria

División Higiene de Alimentos (equivalent to the FDA)

Address:

Edificio Sur, Piso 3, Ofic. 313  
Centro Simón Bolívar, Caracas  
Tel: (58-212) 483-1533/484-3066  
Fax: (58-212) 483-1533  
<http://www.msds.gob.ve>  
Director: Dr. Luis Millán

Services and Agencies under the Ministry of Agriculture and Land (MAT)  
Ministerio de Agricultura y Tierras (similar to the Department of Agriculture)

Address:

Av. Urdaneta, Esquina de Platanal a Candilito,  
Edificio MAT (antiguo edificio Fondo Común)  
La Candelaria  
Caracas, Venezuela  
Tel: (58-212) 509-0188/0121/0111  
Tel: (58-243) 672-6880  
Fax: (58-212) 574-2432  
<http://www.mat.gob.ve>

Instituto Nacional de Salud Agrícola Integral  
(Similar to the US Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service)

Address:

Av. Francisco Solano con calle Pascual Navarro  
Edificio Torre Banvenez, piso 12  
Sabana Grande  
Caracas, Venezuela  
Tel: (58-212) 761-7992/ 761-5897  
Fax: (58-212) 761-4078  
<http://www.insai.gob.ve/>

Contacts:

Maria Fernanda Sandoval – President INSAI  
Wilmer Alcázar – Director Salud Animal  
Willian Goitia – Director Salud Vegetal

### **Ministry of Food Web Site**

The Ministry of Food has information on its web site regarding changes and improvements for import procedures "MINAL-Taquilla Unica." These data can be found at the following web site:

<http://www.minpal.gob.ve/>

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